THE FIFTH DAY.

27th February 1920.

The Assembly met at 12-10 P. M., on Friday, the 27th February 1920.

44. The Village Panchayat Court and its development.

Mr. S. Padmanabha Iyer (Member, T. I. C., Neyyattinkara) spoke about the Panchayat Courts in Vedic and pre-British days and observed that they were not an innovation. What was required was to select convenient centres and open courts in such centres, so that the people might derive the utmost benefit from them. In the first place, the limits of the courts which were co-existent with the boundaries of the Town Improvement Committees should be enlarged, or more courts must be started in convenient centres. For, under the present arrangements of territorial jurisdiction, the area of each Panchayat Court was too small and there was not enough work for a court. It was also desirable that the pecuniary jurisdiction of courts should be raised. The personnel of the Panchayat Courts stood in urgent need of revision. At present some of the judges had no legal knowledge. The Member's suggestion was that the power of selecting judges should be taken away from the Revenue authorities and entrusted to the District Judges who should appoint the members of Panchayat Courts in consultation with the local Munsiff. In course of time the judges of Panchayat Courts should be elected by the people. Criminal Jurisdiction in petty cases might also be given to the Panchayat Courts, the maximum fine leviable being fixed at Rs. 5. Steps should be taken to relieve Government of the financial burden caused by the institution of Panchayat Courts. Lastly, efficiency should not be sacrificed to communal representation and any one appointed as judge should have a fair knowledge of English, Malayalam and Tamil.

Dewan's reply.—In regard to the appointment of judges of the Panchayat Courts, the policy of Government is to select leaders of the bar, wherever possible. The other points are noted.

45. Establishment of two Panchayat Courts, one at Mararikulam midway between Shertallay and Alleppey, and the other at Eramalloor near the northern extremity of Shertallay.

Mr. Vinamsi Thomas (Member, Shertallay taluk) submitted that, on account of the difficulties experienced by the litigant public for want of adequate means of locomotion, two Panchayat Courts—one at Mararikulam and the other at Eramalloor—might be established in the taluk.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

46. Necessity for the transfer of the appellate jurisdiction of the Munsiff's Court at Vaikom from the Parur, to the Kottayam or Alleppey, District Court.

Mr. K. N. Govinda Pillai (Member, T. I. C., Vaikom) represented that the appellate jurisdiction of the Vaikom Munsiff's Court had been vested in the Alleppey District Court, that, subsequently in 1078, it was transferred to the Parur District Court probably because the Parur Court had not sufficient work, that the matter having been again brought to the notice of Government, the jurisdiction was re-transferred to Alleppey in 1080, and that, later on, the old order of things was restored, thus subjecting the people of Vaikom to great hardships and inconveniences. The distance from Vaikom to Alleppey was 20 miles, to Kottayam 18 miles and to Parur 40 miles. The time taken for reaching Alleppey, Kottayam and Parur from Vaikom and the cost of travel were then compared and the Member submitted that, from

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whatever points of view the question might be considered, it was decidedly an advantage to the people that the jurisdiction should be vested in the Alleppey District Court in preference to Kottayam or Parur. If it was thought that the Member's suggestion, when carried out, would render the institution of a District Court at Parur unnecessary, then a Sub-Court might be established at Alwaye or Parur. Secondly, the Member observed that at present the two *pakuthies* of Kaduthuruthi and Manjur from the Ettumanur taluk were included within the jurisdiction of the Vaikom Munsiff's Court. There was a move for locating a Munsiff's Court at Kaduthuruthi. The Member protested against such a move and submitted that, if an additional Court was going to be started, it must be located at Vaikom. In conclusion, he suggested that, if the pecuniary jurisdiction of the Panchayat Courts was raised to Rs. 50, it would afford great relief to Munsiffs.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

47. Necessity for Courts awarding interest at rates agreed to by the parties in their contracts.

Mr. K. A. Krishna Pattar (Member, Trading Classes, Quilon) represented that, in the matter of award of interest in civil suits, the procedure of Civil Courts in British India was to allow in the decree the rate of interest agreed to by the parties. As that practice was not being followed in Travancore, the people were being put to great hardship and loss. The Member, therefore, requested that his request might be granted.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

48. Need for the opening of an additional Sub-Registry Office in the Karthigappalli taluk.

Mr. K. Kunju Panikkar (Member, Nominated) said that there were only two Sub-Registry Offices in the whole taluk, *viz.*, one at Haripad and the other at Kayankulam. The file of documents was increasing immensely till 1089 when, owing to war, there was a temporary set-back. Since the signing of the peace, the instruments for registration had again gone up necessitating the opening of an additional office in the taluk. If an additional Sub-Registry Office were opened in a suitable locality, it would be very convenient to the people.

Dewan's reply.—The representation will be referred to the Director of Registration.

IV. PRODUCTION.—AGRICULTURE AND OTHER INDUSTRIES.

(1) AGRICULTURE.

49. Reorganisation of the Agricultural Department and the help to be given to the ryots by the Government.

Mr. Geevarghese Kathanar Thomas (Member, Mavelikara taluk) began his representation by thanking the Dewan for the Girls' school given to the taluk. He then said that the condition of the agricultural classes was deteriorating day by day. There were in the State 5,76,937 acres of land under paddy cultivation and the annual yield of paddy was 3,36,000 tons or 3,69,60,000 *paras*. The area under cocoanut cultivation was 2,50,000 acres and the number of nuts cropped was 32,50,00,000 whose value at the rate of Rs. 5 per 100 was Rs. 1,62,50,000. Taking paddy and cocoanuts together, each person got per day half a *nali* of rice and 4 *cash*. The statistics of the Registration Department for 1094 also pointed to the large number of cases in which landed property had been transferred by ryots for obtaining loans of money to carry on their agricultural operations. The agricultural loans and the Co-operative Department were not of much use to them. There was no personal credit. It was unquestionable that the Agricultural Department had done its best to improve the agricultural condition, but it felt itself unable to do more. The Director had proposed some measures to ease the agrarian situation. What struck the Member was that a Committee should be appointed consisting of officials and non-officials to make a thorough investigation of the economic problem and suggest remedial measures. The Proceedings of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly

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